Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph **[0002]** with the following amended paragraph:

[0002]   This invention was made~~, at least in part,~~ with government support ~~funding received from the U.S. Department of Energy~~ under grant DE-FG02-02ER63410.000 by the Department of Energy. The U.S. government ~~may retain~~ has certain rights in this invention.

Please replace paragraphs [0030] and [0031] with the following amended paragraphs:

[0030]   Figures 16A-C show the calculated hybridization energies for folding-derived and modified *BaPag*668-706 beacons. Figure 16A shows the same secondary structure as in Figure 4A (SEQ ID NO: 2). The termini of probe *BaPag*668-706 was extended by the self-complementary sequence [d(CGACG)]$_2$ (SEQ ID NO: 11), then the hybridization energy calculated (Figure 16B). Five bases were removed from each end of *BaPag*668-706, replaced with [d(CGACG)]$_2$, and the hybridization energy again calculated (Figure 16C). *BaPag*673 corresponds to *BaPag*668 with 5 bases removed from each end (SEQ ID NO: 12). The complementary sequence of *BaPag*668-706, in 5' to 3' orientation, is AAAGAAAGTGGTACCT AAAGATTATAAGTACTTTCTTT ~~also shown~~ (SEQ ID NO: 7). In each case, calculated ΔΔG was less favorable for the modified beacons than for the probes derived directly from folding.

[0031]   Figures 17A-C show the calculated hybridization energies for folding-derived and modified *BaPag*1208-1241 beacons. Figure 17A shows the same secondary structure as in Figure 4B (SEQ ID NO: 3). The termini of probe *BaPag*1208-1241 was extended by the self-complementary sequence [d(CGACG)]$_2$ (SEQ ID NO: 13), then the hybridization energy calculated (Figure 17B). The complementary sequence of *BaPag*1208-1241, in 5' to 3' orientation, is AGCAATCACAATCCTTTTTAGTTGTGAGCGCT ~~also shown~~ (SEQ ID NO: 8). Five bases were removed from each end of *BaPag*1208-1241, replaced with [d(CGACG)]$_2$ (SEQ ID NO: 14), and the hybridization energy again calculated (Figure 17C). *BaPag*1213 corresponds to *BaPag*1208 with 5 bases removed from each end. In each case, calculated ΔΔG was less favorable for the modified beacons than for the probes derived directly from folding.

Please enter the accompanying Sequence Listing into the specification.